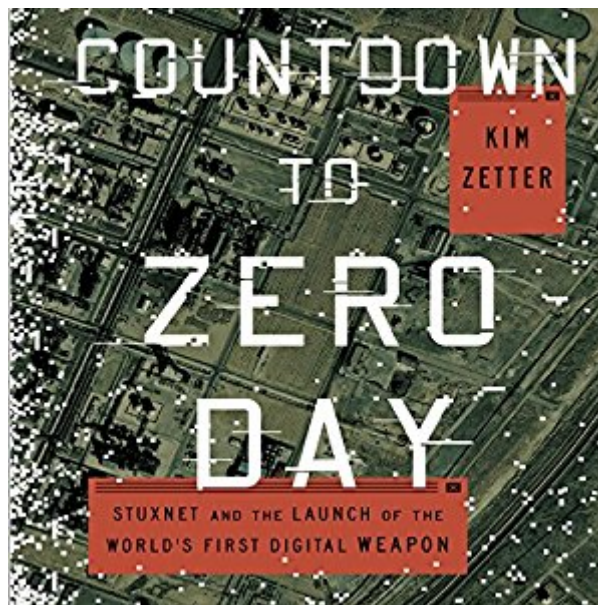


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Countdown To Zero Day: Stuxnet And The Launch Of The World's First Digital Weapon



Synopsis

Top cybersecurity journalist Kim Zetter tells the story behind the virus that sabotaged Iran's nuclear efforts and shows how its existence has ushered in a new age of warfare - one in which a digital attack can have the same destructive capability as a megaton bomb. In January 2010, inspectors with the International Atomic Energy Agency noticed that centrifuges at an Iranian uranium enrichment plant were failing at an unprecedented rate. The cause was a complete mystery - apparently as much to the technicians replacing the centrifuges as to the inspectors observing them. Then, five months later, a seemingly unrelated event occurred: A computer security firm in Belarus was called in to troubleshoot some computers in Iran that were crashing and rebooting repeatedly. At first, the firm's programmers believed the malicious code on the machines was a simple, routine piece of malware. But as they and other experts around the world investigated, they discovered a mysterious virus of unparalleled complexity. They had, they soon learned, stumbled upon the world's first digital weapon. For Stuxnet, as it came to be known, was unlike any other virus or worm built before: Rather than simply hijacking targeted computers or stealing information from them, it escaped the digital realm to wreak actual, physical destruction on a nuclear facility. In these pages, Wired journalist Kim Zetter draws on her extensive sources and expertise to tell the story behind Stuxnet's planning, execution, and discovery, covering its genesis in the corridors of Bush's White House and its unleashing on systems in Iran - and telling the spectacular, unlikely tale of the security geeks who managed to unravel a sabotage campaign years in the making. But Countdown to Zero Day ranges far beyond Stuxnet itself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kim Zetter wrote a remarkable and very readable book about a complex technical subject. Being a non-technical person I comprehended the full scope of it. She put a lot of effort into research and was thorough in her documenting every fact. I'd sometimes read the footnotes at the end of every chapter, which I felt were so worth the time since they often link back to relevant sources and reporting and are quite interesting. Her book is a useful read for every American who wants to have a more comprehensive idea of how our government has been enacting warfare in a new way, and which will very likely set a serious and dangerous precedent for other nation states to follow.

A great read. International mystery, spooks, nuclear threat, US, Iran, Pakistan. It's a current history book (yes, with real facts, notes and references) written by a competent investigative journalist. The computing stuff avoids deep technical discourse (while being accurate) and is quite accessible to the common mortals. Last but not least it reads like a excellent spy novel, a real page turner. I recommend it.

This is an excellent book and must read for anyone with the slightest interest in computer- and cyber security. It is a detailed reconstruction of the program setup to target the progress of Iran's nuclear fuel enrichment program and ostensibly its nuclear weapons program. It is not only written in a way that makes it accessible to anyone, even with little knowledge on computer networks, industrial electronics and software engineering, but it DOES provide all the deeper knowledge and access to specific engineering/technical information (including papers, publications and technical reports) that makes this a joy for any engineer to read. Complete linkage with the work done by David Albright's team at ISIS--which has been providing detailed tracking information on Iran's nuclear activities--is also an integral part of the narrative. The story is complete, from start to end, and makes it one heck of reading!

I really liked this read. A few months ago, I got interested in all of what went down with the Stuxnet virus and was looking for something that would explain the events surrounding it and how it worked. This book did a great job in both capacities. It was entertaining and quite informative not only about the virus itself but also the culture of exploits seekers (think: those who try to find vulnerabilities in software). It also went into detail about the history of attacks on industrial machinery and the hypothetical concerns that are present in the future of this threat given the current infrastructure in place and what's being done on a public level to mitigate the risks. I'd recommend it for anyone that

wants a thorough investigation and an interesting look at the culture involved in finding, exploiting and thwarting vulnerabilities on a worldwide scale.

As someone who works within the cyber security field, I thought I knew what I needed to know about Stuxnet but I picked up the book after being disappointed by the recent movie that was released on the subject. Boy was I wrong. The book goes into great detail about how Stuxnet came to be including some brilliant research work on all aspects of the matter. From the delicate regional political issues all the way down to the variety of versions that built up to the discovery of Stuxnet. I was really impressed and gripped to the book just as you would with a great espionage thriller. Also makes you think long and hard about the future of warfare as a whole, whether digital or conventional. Warmly recommended even if you are not a technical security wiz.

"Countdown to Zero Day" reads like a fictional thriller, yet is obviously a real story. There are a TON of details in this book (the footnotes are crazy!), and I found it fascinating. But, for a dense, non-fictional accounting, it reads fast and was a thrilling story. If you're interested in tech, politics, or even just techno-thriller or similar type books, check it out.

Exciting historical expose of the discovery of the stuxnet virus, largely told through the eyes of the anti virus geeks, who very quickly recognized the profound power of this cyber weapon. The book is very exciting to read, from stuxnet's initial discovery, its structure, the nature of its 'rocket' and 'payload', and then ultimately, its targets. Zetter does an excellent job of filling in the history of computer viruses, from the obnoxious, and by today's standards, quaint viruses of the 90's, to the criminal/financial viruses and malware, to today's brave new nation state weapons. Zetter discusses cyber warfare from just about every aspect, legal, moral, ethical, political, you name it. It is a very exciting, scholarly and enjoyable read. Highly recommended. Thank you.

The critics reviews of this book stole all the great adjectives, but I will echo that this book is alarming, mesmerizing, compelling and add that I believe this is a rallying cry for the digital protest movement. Shadow government agencies operating without warrant or oversight are not fiction or conspiracy but rather the new normal in the post 911 world. The NSA, FBI and CIA in the last decade have all been exposed beyond reproof to be operating outside the boundaries of any type of public purview and the US allies are following our lead. What Countdown to Zero Day really exposes is the first strike that has triggered a silent war being waged across borders and dogmas.

Kim Zetter provides a purely journalistic reporting of a mind-blowing hack in a way that is accessible to anyone interested in international politics, cyber warfare, hacking, ITSec or just an old-fashioned us-V-them spy novel. As the digital protest movement evolves this book should be in the canon of recommended reading for every activist.

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